

Ken Kesey, Lifetime Actor

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In his premier novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Ken Kesey portrayed a mental hospital that was controlled by an evil 'Combine', whose tentacles extended well beyond the hospital walls. This 'Combine' was described using Masonic symbolism, as a society with a secret, hateful agenda to remold the world and to govern it as an empire of human drones and slaves. Kesey's novel powerfully depicted the psychologically destructive potential of psychiatric institutions and their tools, including electroshock therapy and prefrontal lobotomy, and portrayed those methods as weapons that were used by 'The Combine' to achieve their goals of control and dominance. The book seemed to be openly and defiantly critical of these Masons and their allies in the psychiatric professions, and it seemed to represent a call for rebellion against this life-destroying system. And indeed, Kesey's next project, his cross-country bus trip with the 'Merry Pranksters', appeared to represent a concrete expression of that same impulse towards freedom and rebellion.

However, the form of 'rebellion' promoted by Kesey was strangely consistent with the methods of 'The Combine' as described in his novel. His drug of choice, LSD, [was by then well-known](#) (at least by insiders) as another weapon in the psychiatric toolkit, whose primary effect was to induce a dangerous, lasting psychosis in at least a certain percentage of those who took it.

In other words: Kesey's 'rebellion', far from being a potent act of resistance against 'The Combine', was tailor-made to further their goal to achieve the technological enslavement of humankind.

Jan Irvin and I, in our article "[Manufacturing the Deadhead](#)", have shown that many of Kesey's closest friends and associates at the Palo Alto VA hospital, and among the 'Merry Pranksters' and the 'Grateful Dead,' were deeply involved with Freemasonry, the Bohemian Grove, and the CIA MK-Ultra program. These affiliations, combined with Kesey's inside knowledge of Freemasonry and the tools of psychiatry as demonstrated in *Cuckoo's Nest* (as we will show below), make it extremely difficult to take Kesey's public persona seriously. While the most charitable interpretation is that Kesey's promotion of LSD was ultimately deluded or even hypocritical, it seems far more likely that he was in fact a Lifetime Actor. In other words, his public personality was nothing more than a ruse that had been carefully 'crafted' to lure young people into taking the psychosis-producing drug LSD. If this is the case, Kesey himself was actively involved in this organization that was determined to debase an entire generation in order to make them easier to control; and he himself may have designed his seductive persona for that purpose.

The success of Black Propaganda depends on the victim's trust in the attacker. Thus, Kesey presented himself as a hip, spiritual seeker who drove across the country in a

brightly colored bus, engaged in free love, and purportedly used LSD to expand his mind. America's youth trusted Kesey's motivations, and were thus tempted to copy Kesey and his 'Merry Pranksters' and take the LSD they gave away. In fact, Kesey was leading America's youth into cultural oblivion, using tools that had been developed by 'The Combine', and working with artists and technicians who were openly and proudly affiliated with 'The Combine'.

FREEMASONRY IN *CUCKOO'S NEST*

The symbolic level of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* cannot be seen without understanding the strand of typology that it is derived from. It is the same genre of symbolism that was used by J.D. Salinger to create his homage to Freemasonry in *Catcher in the Rye*.

At the beginning of *Cuckoo's Nest*, Kesey introduces a group of Master Masons who know the "hate secrets" of Freemasonry described in the earlier article [*'The Freemason in the Rye'*](#). Kesey uses the classic literary device of having the 'visions' of a madman actually see reality.

The schizophrenic Chief Bromden's visions provide the basis for Kesey's description of Freemasonry. Like the version of Freemasonry Salinger described, it is not the beneficial one presented to the public, but rather an organization dominated by a hate that is kept secret.

To understand the symbolism in the next passage one needs to recognize the Freemasonic fascination with black and white. Checkerboard floors are a standard feature of Masonic temples, and indeed the third level of Freemasonry – the Master Mason – wears [*clothes of black and white*](#). Thus, Kesey below is using typology to describe three individuals 'wearing' black and white, who were selected for their high level of hatred. The fact that they keep 'secrets' is course part of becoming a Master Mason.

*They're out there. **Black boys in white suits** up before me to commit sex acts in the hall and get it mopped up before I can catch them.*

They're mopping when I come out the dorm, all three of them sulky and hating everything, the time of day, the place they're at here, the people they got to work around. When they hate like this, better if they don't see me. I creep along the wall quiet as dust in my canvas shoes, but they got special sensitive equipment detects my fear and they all look up, all three at once, eyes glittering out of the black faces like the hard glitter of radio tubes out of the back of an old radio.

*They laugh and then I hear them mumbling behind me, heads close together. Hum of black machinery, humming hate and death and other hospital **secrets**. They don't bother not talking out loud about their **hate secrets** when I'm nearby because they think I'm deaf and dumb. Everybody thinks so. I'm cagey enough to fool them that much. If my being half Indian ever helped me in any way in this dirty life, it helped me being cagey, helped me all these years.*

While the stereotypical Master Mason is a white man wearing a black suit and white apron, the specific imagery described by Kesey also is reenacted from time to time in Masonic lodges, as depicted in [the image at the right](#).

Kesey describes how difficult it was for Nurse Ratchet to find the right ‘applicants’ to fill the positions of her staff. Most did not possess enough “hate”. The description of Nurse Ratchet’s selecting from her applicants repeats the theme in *Catcher in the Rye* of a cryptic depiction of the Freemason initiation process that works through different ‘levels’, requiring and instilling a secret hatred.

First, Kesey notes the one-month period between an applicant’s registration and his taking the test to gain the first level.

*Her three daytime black boys she acquires after more years of testing and rejecting thousands. They come at her in a long black row of sulky, big-nosed masks, hating her and her chalk doll whiteness from the first look they get. She appraises them and their **hate for a month or so**, then lets them go because they don’t hate enough. When she finally gets the three she wants – gets them one at a time over a number of years, weaving them into her plan and her network – she’s damn positive they hate enough to be capable.*

The first one she gets five years after I been on the ward, a twisted sinewy dwarf the color of cold asphalt. His mother was raped in Georgia while his papa stood by tied to the hot iron stove with plow traces, blood streaming into his shoes. The boy watched from a closet, five years old and squinting his eye to peep out the crack between the door and the jamb, and he never grew an inch after. Now his eyelids hang loose and thin from his brow like he’s got a bat perched on the bridge of his nose.

Next, the novel depicts the Freemason initiation that requires that the initiate be ‘hood-winked’.

Eyelids like thin gray leather, he lifts them up just a bit whenever a new white man comes on the ward, peeks out from under them and studies the man up and down and nods just once like he’s oh yes made positive certain of something he was already sure of. He wanted to carry a sock full of birdshot when he first came on the job, to work the patients into shape, but she told him they didn’t do it that way anymore,

The training helps the initiate learn to hide his hate:

made him leave the sap at home and taught him her own technique; taught him not to show his hate and to be calm and wait, wait for a little advantage, a little slack, then twist the rope and keep the pressure steady. All the time. That’s the way you get them into shape, she taught him.

Kesey then describes becoming a Master Mason and the required wearing of black and

white.

*The other **two black boys** come two years later, coming to work only about a month apart and both looking so much alike I think she had a replica made of the one who came first. They are tall and sharp and bony and their faces are chipped into expressions that never change, like flint arrowheads. Their eyes come to points. If you brush against their hair it rasps the hide right off you.*

*All of them **black as telephones. The blacker they are**, she learned from that long dark row that came before them, the more time they are likely to devote to cleaning and scrubbing and keeping the ward in order. **For instance, all three of these boys' uniforms are always spotless as snow. White and cold and stiff as her own.***

*All three wear starched **snow-white pants and white shirts** with metal snaps down one side and white shoes polished like ice, and the shoes have red rubber soles silent as mice up and down the hall. They never make any noise when they move. They materialize in different parts of the ward every time a patient figures to check himself in private or whisper some secret to another guy. A patient'll be in a corner all by himself, when all of a sudden there's a squeak and frost forms along his cheek, and he turns in that direction and there's a cold stone mask floating above him against the wall. He just sees the black face. No body. **The walls are white as the white suits, polished clean as a refrigerator door, and the black face and hands seem to float against it like a ghost.***

Kesey notes that once a Freemason has been selected and trained in the 'hate secret', they are able to function autonomously. The passage is important in that it shows that there are no written instructions within the organization. This is logical in that such a project would never want to make any records of its existence.

*Years of training, and all three black boys tune in closer and closer with the Big Nurse's frequency. One by one they are able to disconnect the direct wires and operate on beams. **She never gives orders out loud or leaves written instructions that might be found by a visiting wife or schoolteacher.** Doesn't need to any more. **They are in contact on a high-voltage wave length of hate**, and the black boys are out there performing her bidding before she even thinks it.*

The other part of Ratchet's carefully chosen 'staff' is a doctor – cleverly suggested to be a 'thirty-third-degree' mason. Note the clever typology.

Ken Kesey wrote:

Year by year she accumulates her ideal staff: doctors, all ages and types, come and rise up in front of her with ideas of their own about the way a ward should be run, some with backbone enough to stand behind their ideas, and she fixes these doctors with dry-ice eyes day in, day out, until they retreat with unnatural chills. "I tell you I don't know what it is," they tell the guy in charge of personnel. "Since I started on that ward with that woman I feel like my veins are running ammonia. I shiver all the time, my kids won't sit in my lap, my wife won't sleep with me. I insist on a transfer – neurology bin, the alky

tank, pediatrics, I just don't care!"

*She keeps this up for years. **The doctors last three weeks, three months.** Until she finally settles for a little man with a big wide forehead and wide jowls..."*

MCMURPHY – THE FLAVIAN CHRIST

To understand the book's symbolic level, it is first necessary to recognize that its lead character – R. P. McMurphy – was created as a 'Christ' figure; though not a positive individual like the Christ described in the Gospels. McMurphy represents the lineage of the Caesar that Jesus Christ foresaw, Titus Flavius. To create this linkage, Kesey used typology, Gospel quotes, crucifixions, and a fishing trip described as "fishing for men"

Critics have speculated that McMurphy was some kind of Christ 'type' and many of the connections between him and the story in the Gospels are obvious. (For example, see this article by [Raven Moot](#).) In the beginning of the novel, McMurphy is baptized with a shower. The reader is also introduced to Ellis, a character that spends the entire novel in a cross-position "nailed against the wall, arms out." Another typological linkage is presented during the electroshock therapy where McMurphy willingly lies down on a cross-shaped table, ending up in the position that Ellis foreshadowed. McMurphy also asks for his 'crown of thorns'. Before the 'crucifixion' a schizophrenic patient approaches him and says "*I wash my hands of the whole deal*", as Pontius Pilate said to Jesus before sentencing him to death. Jesus was also a friend of a prostitute, just as McMurphy befriends prostitutes.

The most obvious linkage between McMurphy and Christ is the fishing trip in which he leads his twelve disciples – the twelve patients. McMurphy takes the "*twelve of us [patients] towards the ocean*" just like Jesus' 12 disciples, both as a way of strengthening their faith in him and empowering them to rise above their humble position of mental patients.

With the fishing for men trip McMurphy became the leader of the patients, just as Jesus led his disciples. When the trip is over, the Chief describes the sense of change that most of the patients had and even claims that they "*weren't the same bunch of weak-knees from a nuthouse anymore.*"

Moreover, Ellis, the crucified 'type' of Christ, tells Billy to become a "fisher of men".

Ellis pulled his hands down off the nails in the wall and squeezed Billy Bibbit's hand and told him to be a fisher of men.

McMurphy also affected Billy Bibbit, who is typologically linked to Judas Iscariot. Billy betrays McMurphy's guilt for the fishing trip, claiming: "McMurphy did it!" As a result of his betrayal, Billy later takes his own life as Judas did when he gave Jesus to the Romans for crucifixion. In another act of betrayal, Billy refuses to accept the catching of men. Billy is in effect rejecting Flavian Christianity.

And Billy, watching the brass brads on that woman's Levis wink at him as she walked

out of the day room, told Ellis to hell with that fisher of men business.

Similarities can also be drawn between McMurphy and Jesus' healing. Jesus made blind men see and mute men speak. McMurphy is the one who prompted the Chief to speak for the first time and eventually, McMurphy "heals" the Chief of both 'deafness' and 'dumbness'.

However, although McMurphy's typological link to the biblical Jesus Christ is well understood, there is a subtle distinction that needs to be made. McMurphy is also linked clearly to the Flavian version of the savior, Titus Caesar. This is hinted at the book's end when Big Nurse confronts McMurphy and states that he is someone who gambled with "human lives – as if you thought yourself to be a god." Readers of this paper will find the Flavian connections to the Gospels that Kesey is responding to in my book *Caesar's Messiah*.

Kesey began the connection to the Flavians by creating a clever typology showing the Flavian trinity. Kesey depicts this unholy trinity at the beginning of the book with his characters Ellis, Ruckly, and Colonel Matterson. The Flavians are represented in the institution as 'Chronics'. In other words, they are brain dead.

Ellis represents Titus. The character's name is based upon 'Eli', the Jewish god Titus aspired to become. As shown below, Ellis's connection to the Christ character in the Gospels is transparent.

Moreover, Kesey shows an awareness of the occulted meaning in the Gospels – the Flavian typology – by his description of Ellis as 'brain murdered'. This is the most important typological concept in *Cuckoo's Nest*, as it sets up the entire symbolic level. The fate of Ellis was based upon the Flavians' removing of the Jewish Messiah's brain at Golgotha (empty skull). Ellis's brain murder foresees the fate of McMurphy given at the end of the book where he has his brain destroyed, which reverses the story in the Gospels.

Ellis is a Chronic came in an Acute and got fouled up bad when they overloaded him in that filthy brain-murdering room that the black boys call the "Shock Shop." Now he's nailed against the wall in the same condition they lifted him off the table for the last time, in the same shape, arms out, palms cupped, with the same horror on his face. He's nailed like that on the wall, like a stuffed trophy. They pull the nails when it's time to eat or time to drive him in to bed when they want him to move so's I can mop the puddle where he stands. At the old place he stood so long in one spot the piss ate the floor and beams away under him and he kept falling through to the ward below, giving them all kinds of census headaches down there when roll check came around.

'Ruckly' – ruckus – represents Domitian, the Flavian Caesar who was famous for his sexual depravity, particularly sexual intercourse with the wives of his associates.

But he exercised all the tyranny of his high position so lawlessly, that it was even then apparent what sort of a man he was going to be. Not to mention all details, after making

free with the wives of many men,...

Suetonius, Domitian, 1

Kesey wrote:

Ruckly is another Chronic came in a few years back as an Acute, but him they overloaded in a different way: they made a mistake in one of their head installations. He was being a holy nuisance all over the place, kicking the black boys and biting the student nurses on the legs, so they took him away to be fixed. They strapped him to that table, and the last anybody saw of him for a while was just before they shut the door on him; he winked, just before the door closed, and told the black boys as they backed away from him, "You'll pay for this, you damn tarbabies."

And they brought him back to the ward two weeks later, bald and the front of his face an oily purple bruise and two little button-sized plugs stitched one above each eye. You can see by his eyes how they burned him out over there; his eyes are all smoked up and gray and deserted inside like blown fuses. All day now he won't do a thing but hold an old photograph up in front of that burned-out face, turning it over and over in his cold fingers, and the picture wore gray as his eyes on both sides with all his handling till you can't tell any more what it used to be.

*The staff, now, they consider Ruckly one of their failures, but I'm not sure but what he's better off than if the installation had been perfect. The installations they do nowadays are generally successful. The technicians got more skill and experience. No more of the button holes in the forehead, no cutting at all – they go in through the eye sockets. Sometimes a guy goes over for an installation, leaves the ward mean and mad and snapping at the whole world and comes back a few weeks later with black-and-blue eyes like he'd been in a fist- fight, and he's the sweetest, nicest, best-behaved thing you ever saw. He'll maybe even go home in a month or two, a hat pulled low over the face of a sleepwalker wandering round in a simple, happy dream. A success, they say, but I say he's just another robot for the Combine and might be better off as a failure, like Ruckly sitting there fumbling and drooling over his picture. He never does much else. The dwarf black boy gets a rise out of him from time to time by leaning close and asking, "Say, Ruckly, what you figure your little wife is doing in town tonight?" Ruckly's head comes up. Memory whispers someplace in that jumbled machinery. He turns red and his veins clog up at one end. This puffs him up so he can just barely make a little whistling sound in his throat. Bubbles squeeze out the corner of his mouth, he's working his jaw so hard to say something. When he finally does get to where he can say his few words it's a low, choking noise to make your skin crawl – **"Fffffffuck da wife! Fffffffuck da wife!"** and passes out on the spot from the effort.*

Colonel Matterson represents the oldest Flavian Caesar, Vespasian – the father of Titus and Domitian. Kesey named his typological character 'Mattersen' because the name is a variation of 'Matthew'. The 'Matthew' in the Gospels was a publican or tax collector and Vespasian was the most famous tax collector in the Roman Empire.

Vespasian was also a famous General of the Roman Legions, thus the title 'Colonel'.

The 'First War' Kesey refers to is the war between the Flavians and the Jews during the first century. Matterson is "teaching some kind of history" from his "left hand" to depict the 'left handed' or false history the Flavians tried to teach with Josephus and the Gospels. The statement also shows that Matterson is a false god. In Hebraic literature God always produces the truth from his right hand. Kesey intended for Matterson to reverse the false history of Matthew 22:44 – *Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.*

As Salinger did in his Freemason homage *Catcher in the Rye*, Kesey is displaying a deep understanding of the occulted meaning of the Gospels. The Flavian typology in *Cuckoo's Nest* clarifies the basis for the "hate secrets" or, as Salinger called them, the F.U. of Freemasonry. As shown below, the basis for the hatred would be the 'First War', which was the war between the Romans and the Jews between 66 and 73 C E.

Ellis and Ruckly are the youngest Chronics. Colonel Matterson is the oldest, an old, petrified cavalry soldier from the First War who is given to lifting the skirts of passing nurses with his cane, or teaching some kind of history out of the text of his left hand to anybody that'll listen. He's the oldest on the ward, but not the one's been here longest – his wife brought him in only a few years back, when she got to where she wasn't up to tending him any longer.

Throughout the story McMurphy is described as a gambler. This is related to the Flavians who 'gambled' with the lives of their subjects to become a human god. In other words, they accepted the deaths of the Jewish war as an acceptable wager in his desire to become god. It was a bad bet. Kesey wrote:

First Charles Cheswick and now William Bibbit! I hope you're finally satisfied. Playing with human lives – gambling with human lives – as if you thought yourself to be a God!

The statement clarifies everything, as it shows that McMurphy is a false god. Thus Kesey's 'Christ' character is the Flavian Caesar.

Moreover, by having the head of The Combine expose McMurphy as a false god: Kesey shows that far from seeing The Combine as evil, he believes it to represent moral righteousness. This is an important insight in that it also shows why Kesey accepted the positive morality of MK Ultra's and The Combine's use of citizens as animals.

McMurphy's brain murder in *Cuckoo's Nest* reverses the fate of the Jewish Messiah described in the Gospel's typology in which his brain was removed. (See *Shakespeare's Secret Messiah*.) In other words, it is the Gentile McMurphy that has his brain removed.

THE COMBINE – ORDER OUT OF CHAOS

In the key section that contains the representations of the Flavian Trinity, Kesey provides a clear description of the Freemasons' belief that they are creating order out of chaos. In other words, they are restoring the world to the condition that existed before Christianity.

Nurse Ratchet calls McMurphy a disrupter of order. When another nurse, Miss Flinn,

asks why he does this, she replies:

You seem to forget, Miss Flinn, that this is an institution for the insane.

The next passage is of critical importance in that it describes the ‘chaos’ that McMurphy has created and the ‘order’ that Ratchet’s organization creates. Kesey is describing the ‘order out of chaos’ that Freemasonry claims to be bringing about. This is what is depicted by phrase ‘Novus Ordo Seclorum’ – ‘New Order of the World’ – on the U S dollar.

The Big Nurse tends to get real put out if something keeps her outfit from running like a smooth, accurate, precision-made machine. The slightest thing messy or out of kilter or in the way ties her into a little white knot of tight-smiled fury. She walks around with that same doll smile crimped between her chin and her nose and that same calm whirl coming from her eyes, but down inside of her she’s tense as steel. I know, I can feel it. And she don’t relax a hair till she gets the nuisance attended to – what she calls “adjusted to surroundings.”

Kesey then describes The Combine. This is the organization of secret societies, governments and businesses that are under control of the group that Freemasonry is a part of. As Kesey describes it, The Combine controls the entire world.

Under her rule the ward Inside is almost completely adjusted to surroundings. But the thing is she can’t be on the ward all the time. She’s got to spend some time Outside. So she works with an eye to adjusting the Outside world too. Working alongside others like her who I call the “Combine,” which is a huge organization that aims to adjust the Outside as well as she has the Inside, has made her a real veteran at adjusting things. She was already the Big Nurse in the old place when I came in from the Outside so long back, and she’d been dedicating herself to adjustment for God knows how long.

And I’ve watched her get more and more skillful over the years. Practice has steadied and strengthened her until now she wields a sure power that extends in all directions on hairlike wires too small for anybody’s eye but mine; I see her sit in the center of this web of wires like a watchful robot, tend her network with mechanical insect skill, know every second which wire runs where and just what current to send up to get the results she wants. I was an electrician’s assistant in training camp before the Army shipped me to Germany and I had some electronics in my year in college is how I learned about the way these things can be rigged.

What she dreams of there in the center of those wires is a world of precision efficiency and tidiness like a pocket watch with a glass back, a place where the schedule is unbreakable and all the patients who aren’t Outside, obedient under her beam, are wheelchair Chronicles with catheter tubes run direct from every pantleg to the sewer under the floor.

Kesey called the organization ‘The Combine’ perhaps because he was describing more than simply high level Freemasonry, but all of the secret societies that are united under the “hate secrets”. The total control over the mental Institution in *Cuckoo’s Nest* is a

microcosm for The Combine's control over the whole world.

KEN KESEY AND MK ULTRA

But exactly which groups made up 'The Combine' that Ken Kesey wrote about in 1960? Certainly at least part of it were the secret societies that were united in producing the counter culture that Kesey's book helped to bring about.

For example, when Kesey stood backstage at one of the Acid Tests while the Grateful Dead were playing and LSD was being given out for free to youths, he would have been in the midst of a number of Secret Societies and black ops government agencies. Within the Grateful Dead, its management, the band's financiers, its sound technicians and drug suppliers were members and associates of the Freemasons, Bohemian Grove, MK Ultra, OSS and the Tavistock Institution. Such a collection could not be circumstantial and shows the interconnection of the secret societies into 'The Combine'.

At left is a hand drawn poster to one of Ken Kesey's first 'Acid Tests, where Kesey first gave away LSD to the public. Note the all seeing eye of Freemasonry, as well as the twin pillars of Jachin and Boaz. The pillars appear to be slightly curved, and equipped with teeth like chain saws. And what are those dots dripping from the 'Acid Test' logo: are they tears, or are they drops of blood? The Grateful Dead were then known as the 'Warlocks', yet another indication of their occult interests. The Acid Tests were where Kesey first gave away LSD to the public.

Here is [a description of the poster's provenance](#):

This is a One-of-A-Kind Poster, hand drawn, and not mass distributed for the event. It is likely the only one made, or at least, the only one that survived. At this point in the early acid test days, Posters and handbills were not being used to advertise events. Instead, small Posters were placed up in local coffee shops and hangouts around town, of which there were several up and down the bay, but the most prominent of these was a little place called the Catalyst. At the time, it was a lively coffee shop, but now it has moved up the street and small bands play there, as it has been turned into a club.

At the right is a flyer for the first Grateful Dead Album, dominated by the Eye of Horus, depicting the band members standing between the pillars of an Egyptian temple. Its inscription, 'In the land of the dark, the ship of the sun is driven by the Grateful Dead,' seems to be a boast of control over the counter-culture, exerted by 'The Combine' via their rock idols and drugs.

Another secret society that Kesey consorted with was MK Ultra. The CIA created the project to, among things, develop techniques the government could use to affect the citizens' subconscious. Kesey was well aware of this objective, and described it in the book. He wrote:

Bring these old sins into the open where they can be washed by the sight of all. And

participate in Group Discussion. Help yourself and your friends probe into the secrets of the subconscious. There should be no need for secrets among friends.

Our intention, he usually ends by saying, is to make this as much like your own democratic, free neighborhoods as possible – a little world Inside that is a made-to-scale prototype of the big world Outside that you will one day be taking your place in again.

Throughout the book Kesey shows awareness of the criminal techniques developed by MK Ultra, and how they were related to the technologies which were in use, both then and now, in America's mental health system. This understanding would contradict what Kesey would have been told in his employment as a night orderly at the Palo Alto VA hospital. Psychologists claim that [electroshock](#) has therapeutic benefits for patients suffering from depression and anxiety. At the time Kesey was writing, those same benefits were claimed for [prefrontal lobotomy](#). (Today, of course, drugs such as Prozac are most widely used for these purposes.)

However, Ken Kesey describes EST and other brain mechanical techniques being employed by 'The Combine' for the express purpose of breaking the subject's mind and without any therapeutic purpose. This was acknowledged within MK Ultra, but has always been ignored or denied within any normal mental health hospital. Kesey might have learned that the technology was effective for these purposes, in conversations with the personnel who were involved in carrying out the experiments with LSD and other psychoactive drugs at the VA hospital at that time, which were being covertly sponsored by the CIA.

Kesey wrote:

We're benched in a long row down a bail leading to a door marked X-RAY. Next to X-ray is a door marked EENT where they check our throats during the winter. Across the hall from us is another bench, and it leads to that metal door. With the line of rivets. And nothing marked on it at all. Two guys are dozing on the bench between two black boys, while another victim inside is getting his treatment and I can hear him screaming. The door opens inward with a whoosh, and I can see the twinkling tubes in the room. They wheel the victim out still smoking, and I grip the bench where I sit to keep from being sucked through that door. A black boy and a white one drag one of the other guys on the bench to his feet, and he sways and staggers under the drugs in him. They usually give you red capsules before Shock. They push him through the door, and the technicians get him under each arm. For a second I see the guy realizes where they got him, and he stiffens both heels into the cement floor to keep from being pulled to the table – then the door pulls shut, phumph, with metal hitting a mattress, and I can't see him any more.

"Man, what they got going on in there?" McMurphy asks Harding.

"In there? Why, that's right, isn't it? You haven't had the pleasure. Pity. An experience no human should be without." Harding laces his fingers behind his neck and leans back to look at the door. "That's the Shock Shop I was telling you about some time back, my friend, the EST, Electro-Shock Therapy. Those fortunate souls in there are being given a free trip to the moon. No, on second thought, it isn't completely free. You pay for the

service with brain cells instead of money, and everyone has simply billions of brain cells on deposit. You won't miss a few."

He frowns at the one lone man left on the bench. "Not a very large clientele today, it seems, nothing like the crowds of yesteryear. But then, c'est la vie, fads come and go. And I'm afraid we are witnessing the sunset of EST. Our dear head nurse is one of the few with the heart to stand up for a grand old Faulknerian tradition in the treatment of the rejects of sanity: Brain Burning."

The door opens. A Gurney comes whirring out, nobody pushing it, takes the corner on two wheels and disappears smoking up the hall.

McMurphy watches them take the last guy in and close the door. "What they do is" – McMurphy listens a moment – "take some bird in there and shoot electricity through his skull?"

"That's a concise way of putting it."

"What the hell for?"

"Why, the patient's good, of course. Everything done here is for the patient's good. You may sometimes get the impression, having lived only on our ward, that the hospital is a vast efficient mechanism that would function quite well if the patient were not imposed on it, but that's not true. EST isn't always used for punitive measures, as our nurse uses it."

The fact that MK Ultra used EST to burn the brains of unwitting subjects is well documented. Below is from the [Cathy Fox blog](#):

Perhaps the most famous case of mind control in Canada is that perpetrated by Scottish Dr Donald Ewen Cameron [\[20\]](#) at the Allan Memorial Institute, Montreal, MKULTRA Subproject 68, and the Institute was part of the McGill University. From January 1957 until September 1960, Dr. Cameron's project received \$64,242.44 in CIA funds. When the CIA stopped funding him, Cameron received \$57,750 from the Canadian government to continue his research [\[61\]](#). John Gittinger, CIA agent and psychologist, was Ewen Cameron's project officer [\[61\]](#). Gittinger said "brainwashing was largely a process of isolating a human being, keeping him out of contact, putting him out of control, putting him under long stress in relationship to interviewing and interrogation, and that they could produce any change that way"

Wikipedia lists MKULTRA Subproject 68 [\[20\]](#) as "one of Cameron's ongoing attempts to establish lasting effects in a patient's behaviour" using a combination of particularly intensive electroshock, intensive repetition of prearranged verbal signals, partial sensory isolation, and repression of the driving period carried out by inducing continuous sleep for seven to ten days at the end of the treatment period....

It is known that at least four MKULTRA Subprojects were on children, but not known if these were carried out in Canada. The deliberate creation of multiple personality in children is an explicitly stated plan in the MKULTRA Subproject Proposal submitted for funding on May 30, 1961. BB 61, 176, 177 [\[60\]](#) [\[61\]](#) [\[37\]](#)

An article from McGill Daily of the McGill University, which is the University Cameron was part of, *MK-ULTRA Violence Or, how McGill pioneered psychological torture*, states in one comment “children’s homes were set up across Canada in the 1960s and afterwards, with links to psychiatric institutions where some highly questionable experiments were taking place. Children in care had very little protection, and were often considered throwaways — with tragic consequences. Films like Warrendale popularized the notion that certain “emotionally disturbed” kids could benefit from special treatment facilities that used experimental techniques first developed at the London-based Tavistock Institute, the birthplace of MK Ultra mind control. The “Warrendale method” spread across Canada in the 1960s and 70s and was taught to childcare workers everywhere — the “holding therapy” it was based on has since been discredited. Reportedly, powerful psychotropic drugs were also tested on this captive child population.

NATIVE REVIVAL

Gregory Bateson was present at the Palo Alto VA at the same time as Ken Kesey and his participation in the MK Ultra experiments, and it was Bateson who developed the anthropology that was the basis for the ‘counter culture’. Bateson’s science also provides a possible motivation for Kesey’s advice to his readers to “turn on, tune in and drop out”. In other words, Kesey was encouraging his followers to take psychosis-producing drugs and return to the land as serfs.

As quoted in my article [Gregory Bateson and the Counter Culture](#), Bateson wrote:

*The most significant experiment which has yet been conducted in the adjustment of relations between “superior” and “inferior” peoples is the Russian handling of their Asiatic tribes in Siberia. The findings of this experiment support very strongly the conclusion that it is very important to foster spectatorship among the superiors and exhibitionism among the inferiors. In outline, what the Russians have done is to stimulate the native peoples to undertake a **native revival** while they themselves admire the resulting dance festivals and other exhibitions of native culture, literature, poetry, music and so on.*

OSS ... might move gently towards making the British and the Dutch more aware of the importance of processes of this kind (Bateson 1944:6-7).

Kesey depicted Bateson’s aboriginal native revival and return to the land with his story’s ending. After the rebellious McMurphy is lobotomized, the ‘Chief’ kills McMurphy and rips apart a ‘Control Panel’, representing technology. He uses the panel to break a window at the asylum, making a triumphant escape to nature. Thus, a reader takes in the message that ‘The Combine’ is invincible, and the only escape is to abandon any sort of

struggle against their power. The message is reinforced by the fact that the Chief transitions from insane to sane by returning to nature.

At the book's conclusion, again reiterating this message of passivity in the face of injustice, Kesey wrote:

I've even heard that some of the tribe have took to building their old ramshackle wood scaffolding all over that big million-dollar hydroelectric dam, and are spearing salmon in the spillway. I'd give something to see that. Mostly, I'd just like to look over the country around the gorge again, just to bring some of it clear in my mind again.